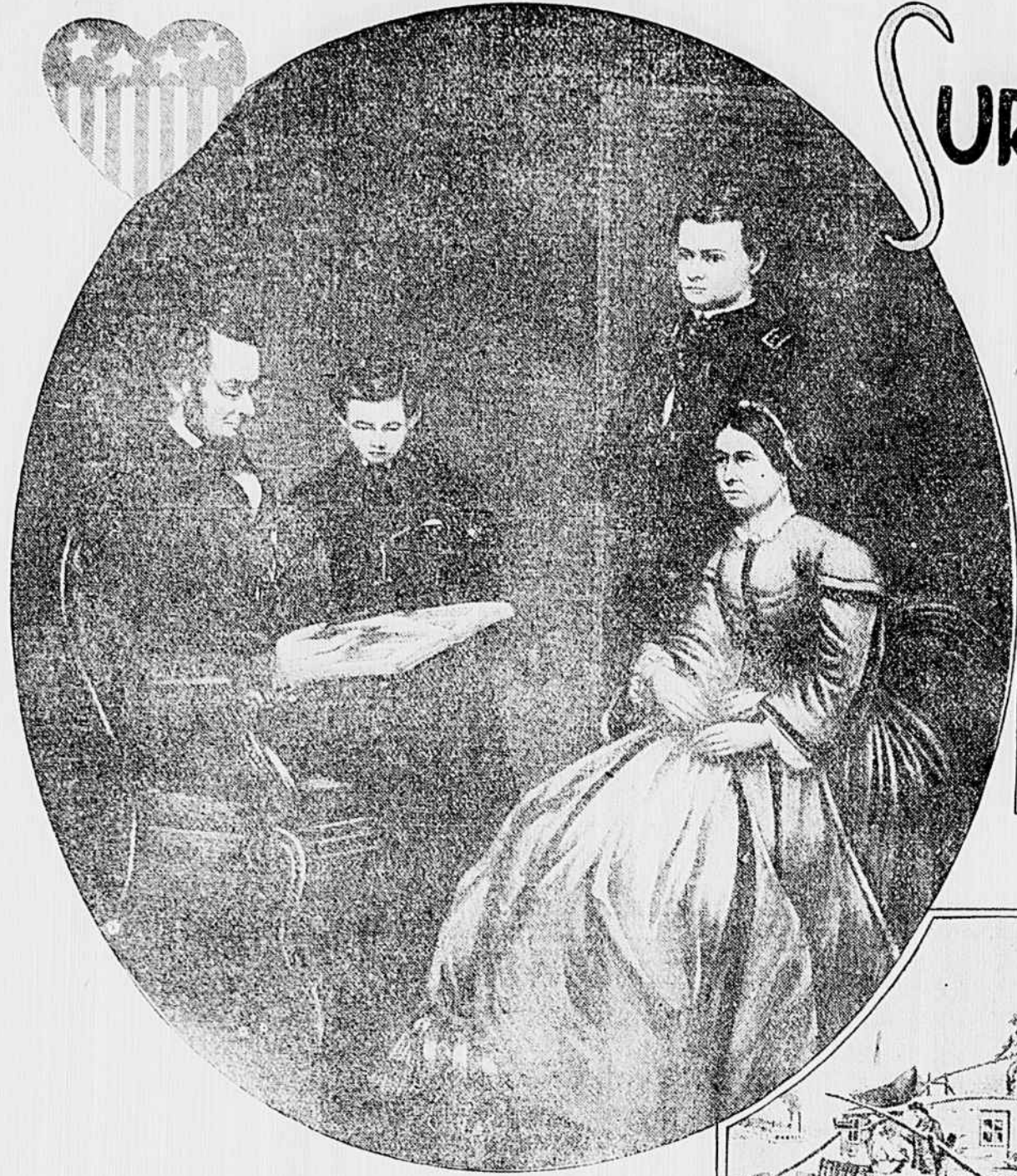


SURPRISING NEW FACTS ABOUT LINCOLN

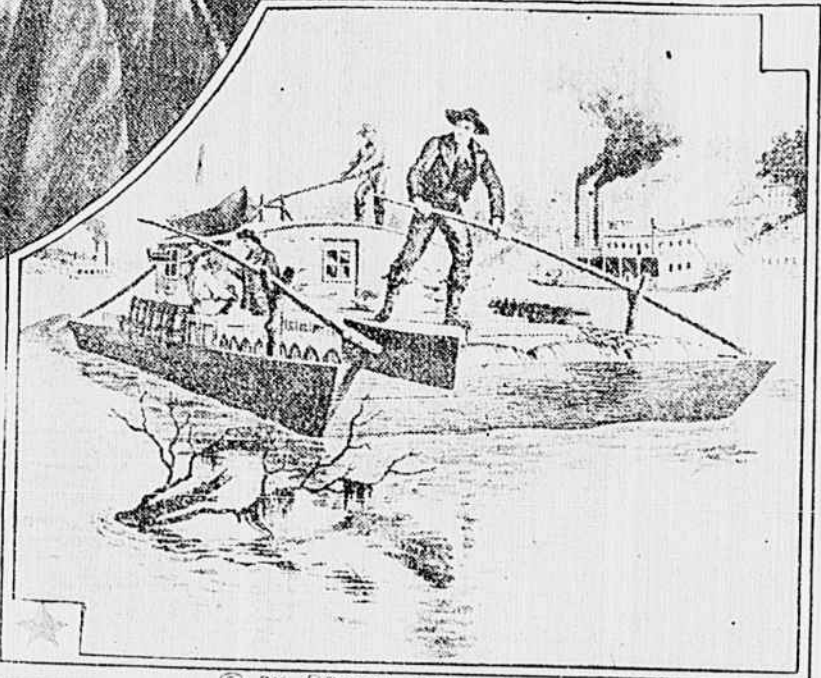
Not on Bad Terms with His Wife; Once Threatened with Tuberculosis Which Her Watchful Care Averted; Never "Insane" Over the Death of His Early Love, Ann Rutledge---Writes an Intimate Personal Friend



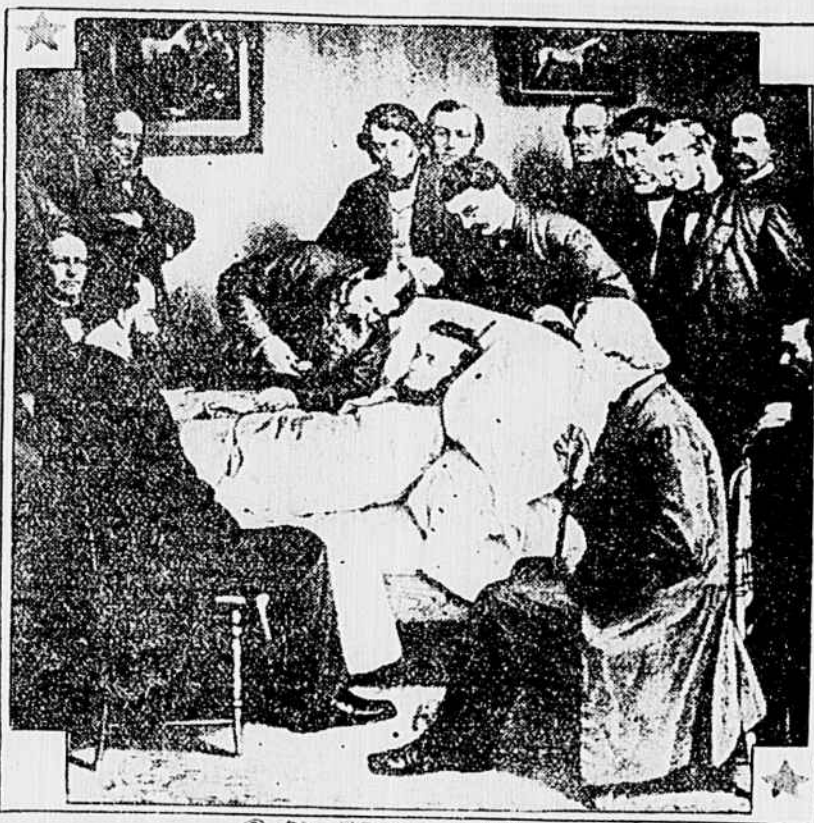
The Lincoln Family in the White House—From an Old Print.



The Last Photograph of President Lincoln.



Lincoln as a Flat-boatman on the Sangamon River and Lincoln and Douglas in Debate Before a Typical Illinois Audience—Two Curious and Rare Old Prints.



Scene at the Deathbed of Lincoln, in a Room Opposite Ford's Theatre, Washington, Where the President Was Assassinated.

MARY TODD LINCOLN was not the cause of those "moods of black melancholy" which were wont to seize Abraham Lincoln after he became President of the United States. Throughout the period of their married lives, Mrs. Lincoln was the capable mate of a man of genius, a helpful, loved and loving wife.

This is one of the calamities of biography, one of the mistakes of tradition, swept away in the pages of the most recent of the many volumes dealing with the career of the martyred President. The book is replete with details of other long-accepted statements and theories which those who reverence the name of Lincoln recall with regret.

All these surprising new facts about Lincoln are stated with considerable authority. Henry B. Rankin, one of the "Lincoln Boys" of the Sangamon Valley, at the ripe age of seventy-nine years, sets them down in his "Personal Recollections of Abraham Lincoln," lately published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York and London. "For more than a dozen years," writes Mr. Rankin, "I met Lincoln often. During the four years preceding his election to the Presidency I had close relations with the law office of Lincoln & Herndon in connection with some of their legal, political and literary activities. I wish to see removed as exaggerations the slurs and caricatures, luminous with their distortions, from many of the so-called 'accepted historical accounts' of the personality of Lincoln; and to make other corrections, even more especially due, to the memory of Mrs. Lincoln."

Of the slander that Lincoln was an unwilling bridegroom, Mr. Rankin writes:

That Unwilling Bridegroom Slander.

"Those writers who tell of a marriage company and supper without a groom, and of the disconsolate maiden, toying with her head-dress in nervous agitation, are guilty of a cruel fiction. Had such an event happened in a town the size of Springfield, the story could not have been kept locked up in the memory of a few, and they unfriendly and not intimate of Mrs. Todd or her Springfield relatives. It would have been scattered widely in a notorious piece of delicious gossip to be published from the circles of 'five hundred' names. Social gossip was never more active or long-lived than in Western communities of that period."

A visit made by Lincoln in company with Joshua Speed to Louisville, Ky., was coincident with Speed's leaving Springfield and returning permanently to Louisville. Lincoln went in response to Speed's invitation. At the time he was in one of his periods of depression from ill-health, or as he termed it, "attack of hypochondria," aggravated, probably, by the opposition of Miss Todd's relatives to their marriage and to the breaking off for the time, of the engagement. Lincoln was sensitive to the reflections of Miss Todd's family on his humble parentage and poverty as a barrier to their marriage. In view of this,

he felt it to be his duty to all parties concerned at that time to release her from her promise. This he had done.

"Her guardian and near friends planned for her a marriage of wealth and distinction. She was, by all odds, the reigning belle of the little city. Lincoln was ten years older than she. Pique and jealousy and temperamental misunderstandings among their friends had plenty of edges to cut and mar their courtship, as can easily be seen when we look back upon the condition in which they lived. There is no need to call up the pipe-dream shadows of a Salem story, and invoke the uncanny word 'insanity' to account for the temporary estrangement of Lincoln and Miss Todd in 1839, and an extended visit with the Speeds at Louisville."

quote now from Mrs. Emily Todd Helm—a half-sister of Mrs. Lincoln—a statement written by her regarding the subject:

"There has been so much written and printed upon the subject of Mrs. Lincoln's marriage, that I will only say that Mrs. Lincoln's family had no knowledge of any want of faith or honor on Mr. Lincoln's part. Mrs. Dr. Wallace, Mrs. Lincoln's sister, positively asserted that there was never but one wedding arranged between Mary Todd and Mr. Lincoln, and that was the one that occurred. Mr. Herndon says that it was a large wedding, and that Mrs. Lincoln was married in a white silk dress. This is an error, and he must have con-

ferred Mrs. Lincoln's wedding with that of her sister, Mrs. Wallace, who was married a little before. Mrs. Lincoln, by preference, had a quiet marriage. Mrs. Wallace says that on a Sunday morning Mr. Lincoln and Mary Todd called Mrs. Edwards to where they were sitting, and told her they had decided to be married that evening. Mrs. Wallace was sent for, and she says that she never worked harder in her life than on that day. Only a few people were present. Mr. Presser, the minister, held a short service in his church, and afterward went up to Mr. Edwards's house, where the marriage took place. There were present Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Edwards, Major and Mrs. John Todd Stuart, Dr. John Todd and family, Dr. and Mrs. Wallace and Mr. and Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards. The bride was clad in a simple white muslin dress."

"Dismissing the pettish wedding picture, we find Lincoln, immediately on his return from Louisville, writing back to his friends there that he is made very happy by hearing that Miss Todd, who had gone with a train load of merry young folks on a trip to Jacksonville, was reported to him as being cheerful and happy. This letter, with events soon to follow, clearly shows that Lincoln had not lost his affection for Miss Todd, and that her happiness was still a chief concern in his life."

and, as I can personally vouch, the most social of all the society-loving merry dandies of Springfield at that time. She was a close friend of all the best society people, and was inferior to none as a leader in all the good things among Springfield's social affairs. She held to a very strict observance of all the courtesies and obligations due in social life. Had Lincoln been guilty of falling to keep his wedding date, a few people were present. Mr. Presser, the minister, held a short service in his church, and afterward went up to Mr. Edwards's house, where the marriage took place. There were present Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Edwards, Major and Mrs. John Todd Stuart, Dr. John Todd and family, Dr. and Mrs. Wallace and Mr. and Mrs. Ninian W. Edwards. The bride was clad in a simple white muslin dress."

social, or business affairs; saw them in their carriage together, driving out on our city streets and country roads; saw them at parties; saw them regularly attending church together every Sunday when both were at home; I saw them often in crowded assemblies of all sorts and conditions of public affairs; often again in both pleasant and trying circumstances with their children, and later with huzzahing party admirers filling their modest home and sometimes overflowing the streets around their residence on Eighth street with embarrassing familiarity. In none of these situations did I ever detect in Mrs. Lincoln aught but the most wisely and maternally proprietorial and respect toward her husband, her family and her friends. She adapted herself cheerfully to all those exacting functions at their home required of Lincoln in his public life.

Lincoln had Chatterton engrave on the wedding ring, which he placed on Mary Todd's finger the evening of their marriage—"Love is Eternal." I did not know, in the years I saw that ring on Mrs. Lincoln's hand, the marriage legend it bore so securely within its circle. But now as I write these lines, the memory of the years during which I knew Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln's wedded life brings with it no shadows that darken or doubt the discredited sacred pledge which Lincoln then gave his bride and which she accepted with fullest maidenly confidence. He was a sincere man; she was a loving and loyal wife.

His Wife Ever His Chief Solace.

"Those were moods of inner solitude into which Lincoln sometimes lapsed, when his silences were mysterious to all his friends. I have referred fully to this mood elsewhere, as one of his personal peculiarities. None should be so rash and unjust as to interpret them as shadows cast by Mrs. Lincoln over his married life. That would be false and more than cruel. They were characteristic of him long before he met her; they remained inseparable from his remarkable personality all his life. Mrs. Lincoln, on the contrary, so far from being a cause of this mood, was his greatest solace in those inner solitudes. Her sprightliness of spirit, her keenness of wit, the brightness of her versatile mind, lit up many times—as I personally know—the gloom and self-centred moodiness of his spells of melancholy that, as Herndon aptly said, 'at times dripped from him.' She, of all who were near him, was the only one who had the skill and tact to shorten their duration; the only one privileged to attempt it."

"She was the animating cause, I am glad to say, of Lincoln's absence on tours out in the Eighth district to extend his law practice and help swell their slim finances by more extensive acquaintance. But his going on those long trips was not to escape his home, as some historians have intimated. That was a cruel, bitter, false

charge. His wife was at home attending to its every interest and discharging willingly, faithfully, gladly, every duty that Lincoln's absence added to her usual cares."

The stories about the crackers and cheese luncheon at the law office, about the long moody walks to get his lonely wife, and so many other of the petty matters of gossip that have lodged in what purports to be history—all these could be taken up, one by one, and shown to be independent of any and all relation to Mrs. Lincoln. For example, the sound of Lincoln's axe heard from his woodshed at 1 o'clock at night, was interpreted by a gossiping neighbor and put into more than one history, as evidence that he stole back home at that late hour and was 'preparing to get his lonely supper.' The fact was, that Lincoln often remained at his office into the small hours engaged in legal or political work when he could be free of all callers; that he always retained and enjoyed his Salem-grocer munching habit and provided frugal lunches of cheese and crackers taken at various other times in his office.

Her Constant Care for His Health.

"Mrs. Lincoln had forebodings about her husband's health. This was the cause of her watchful interest with all details about his clothing and diet. She had been advised by her brother-in-law, Dr. Wallace, that Lincoln had tendencies to ailments that without prudent attention to his nutrition might be serious. This opinion was confirmed by other physicians she had consulted, without her husband's knowledge. Several of Lincoln's friends—Herndon, John T. Stuart, B. F. Edwards, and his two brothers-in-law, Dr. Wallace and C. M. Smith among them—I recall as speaking of Lincoln's inherited tendency to consumption."

"This watchful interest in her husband's welfare and care for his health was one of common knowledge among those near Lincoln, or intimate with their well-ordered home in Springfield. It was more difficult for her to enforce this regularity with the President, amid the stress of his official life than when at Springfield. Washington officialdom, and the political crowd that thronged the White House, resented this and misinterpreted the wife's interference with what they considered their exclusive claims on him at any and all times. But Mrs. Lincoln in those strenuous years relaxed none of her insistence that Lincoln be punctual to respond to the call from the dining-room."

In the chapter dealing with Lincoln's early life, the charming and beautiful Ann Rutledge, there is in direct rebuke for those biographers who have asserted or implied that Abraham Lincoln was a victim of insanity for several weeks following Miss Rutledge's death in 1835. He was ill from the epidemic of malaria which carried off so many residents of Salem. "The Spring and early Summer of 1835, I have been told, was a time of unusually large rainfall and high temperature in central Illinois. By

July the rains ceased and extreme heat dried up and parched the luxuriant vegetation of earlier physicians named 'bilious fever' became unusually prevalent. In every home some member was stricken down, and in most home all the family were ill at the same time. Treatment of these malarial diseases was very crude and drastic at that time."

"Heroic doses of medicine were administered—often more fatal than the disease—killing a person of frail physique instead of effecting a cure. The Rutledge family were among the unfortunate many who suffered. Ann was among the last to be stricken. Lincoln had been a frequent visitor and assistant in nursing at the Rutledge home during their sickness—going over from Salem with Dr. John Allen, the physician, every day or two. He would stay over night when needed, or return with the doctor, who would stop for him after visiting the other patients in that neighborhood. At length toward the end of August, Miss Rutledge's condition passed beyond the help of physicians and nurses, and the delirium of her last few days—common in the fatal cases of those malarial fevers—brought an end to her life on August 25, 1835."

Grief and Illness, Not "Insanity."

"For a month or more before, Lincoln himself—with all the physical vigor he then possessed and preserved until that fatal bullet ended his life—had been suffering from the chills and fever on alternate days. He kept up and was helping nurse others all the while, but was taking heroic doses of Peruvian bark, boneset tea, jalap and calomel. Added to the depression of Lincoln from illness in those days, was that from the death of several of his personal friends, and the neighborly aid he had given unstintingly at the funerals and burials of those who died."

"There were no undertakers. No caskets were kept on hand. Coffins had to be made after the death, and in a few instances he had assisted in making them for his friends. In this environment of distress that he was day and night helping to relieve, in addition to the poisonous malarial that had been for weeks alternately chilling and burning his stalwart frame, he was now to endure the supreme tragedy of his life in the death of Ann Rutledge."

"As the word 'insanity' has been used as descriptive of Lincoln's life shortly after the death of Ann Rutledge, I have dwelt with more fullness in recital of these events of 1835 than I otherwise would have considered necessary."

"In less than a month—in three weeks—Lincoln returned to his usual affairs at Salem and resumed his surveying tramps wherever they were called for. He used such spare time as his occupations afforded by reading law with the definite intention of entering that profession."

The theme of this book really is a defense of Mary Todd Lincoln. It points out with emphasis that she was even a helpful, never a hindrance. She refused to let Lincoln accept President Fillmore's offer of the Governorship of Oregon, which he was strongly inclined to do. For this and other reasons the biographer asserts:

"Without Mary Todd for his wife, Abraham Lincoln would never have been President. Without Abraham Lincoln for her husband, Mary Todd would, probably, never have been a President's wife. From the day of their marriage they supplemented each other in many unusual times and always through those remarkable years."